

**Michigan Department of Natural Resources
1994 Public Act 451, Section 52506 Report
Fiscal Year (FY) 2011-12**

The Department of Natural Resources (Department) is required to provide a report to the Natural Resources Commission and the Legislature that details the following:

(a) The number of harvestable acres in the state forest, as determined by the certification program under section 52506.

Forest certification systems do not determine the number of harvestable acres. Forest certification systems evaluate whether harvesting is being conducted in accordance with sustainable forestry principles that consider a broad range of environmental, social, and economic criteria. The 2008 Michigan State Forest Management Plan (April 10, 2008) addresses the planning requirements of Part 525 and forest certification systems, and allows for a minimum of 53,000 acres prepared for harvest each year. The Department will re-evaluate the opportunity to increase minimum wood fiber production within six months of the Director's approval of the Regional Forest Management Plans.

(b) The number of acres of the state forest that were harvested and the number of cords of wood that were harvested from the state forest.

There were 45,444 acres of state forest harvested in FY 2011-12, producing an estimated volume of 696,900 cords. Approximately 56,609 acres were prepared for timber sale auction by the Department, with an estimated volume of 773,400 cords.

(c) The number of acres of state-owned lands owned or controlled by the Department, other than state forest lands that were harvested, and the number of cords of wood that were harvested from those lands.

On non-state forest lands owned or controlled by the Department, a total of 592 acres of timber were prepared in FY 2011-12, with a volume of 2,325 cords.

(d) Efforts by the Department to promote recreational opportunities in the state forest.

The state forest recreation and trails programs were moved to the Parks and Recreation Division (PRD) effective January 1, 2012, through a land use order that was put in place designating state forest campgrounds and trails as state recreation areas. This designation required the Recreation Passport for non-motorized trailheads and state forest campgrounds.

The recreation and trails programs were promoted at outdoor shows; recreation conferences, such as the Michigan Recreation and Parks Association conference; the Michigan Snowmobile Association meetings; and through various Department press releases, publications, and the Department website.

Trail maps of the off-road vehicle (ORV) and snowmobile trail systems are on the Department website in a format that permits public printing and use of the maps, as well as a free download to hand-held global positioning units (GPS). Equestrian riding and camping opportunities on state-owned lands are also highlighted on the Department website.

Press releases on camping and trails activities and recreation improvement projects on state lands are issued regularly throughout the year, as are seasonal-themed news articles for state forest camping and trail recreation opportunities.

The Department continues to collaborate with outside agencies and organizations to promote, acquire, and develop trails, including work with the Michigan Trails and Greenways Alliance, the National Park Service Rivers, the Trails and Conservation Assistance Program, the USDA National Forest, and the Michigan Department of Transportation (MDOT).

The Michigan Snowmobile and Trails Advisory Council (MSTAC) continues to meet quarterly and has been working with the Department on the Michigan Comprehensive Trail Plan, as required by Public Act 45 of 2010. The MSTAC was created by the Governor to advise the Department on the creation, development, operation, and maintenance of motorized and non-motorized trails in the state.

(e) Information on the public's utilization of the recreational opportunities offered by the state forest.

State forest camping revenue collected was \$1.06 million in FY 2012. The FY 2012 use and revenue data will be the baseline for future year comparisons. In FY 2012, the Director adopted a land use order to reduce rustic camping fees by \$2, from \$15 to \$13, and reduce equestrian camping fees by \$3, from \$20 to \$17. The purpose for the reduction was to align the state forest camping fees with the fees for state park rustic camping, which offers a similar experience. Numerous improvements were made during FY 2012 which benefited the customer experience and increased staff presence, improving management of the program, including revenue collections.

There were 201,696 ORV trail licenses sold during FY 2012, an increase of 7,413 licenses compared to FY 2011.

There were 124,287 snowmobile trail permits sold during the 2011-12 season (September 1, 2011 through July 31, 2012), a decline of 39,716 trail permits from the 2010-11 season.

Trails groups worked to combine the motorized sign program to improve signage and visitor information.

Use permits were issued for a variety of recreational special events, such as dog sledding, skiing, mountain bike and snowshoe races, dog trials, skeet shooting, and trail riding on state forest lands.

(f) Efforts by the Department to promote wildlife habitat in the state forest.

The Wildlife Division works jointly with the Forest Resources Division in the compartment review process to ensure wildlife habitat management goals are reflected in the stand level treatments that are approved. In FY 2011-12, the Wildlife Division participated in reviewing about 385,000 acres of state forest to determine wildlife management needs. Beyond vegetative management reviews, this acreage includes consideration for habitat improvement and habitat planning on sites with specific plant and animal concerns.

Public review of the first drafts of the Regional State Forest Management Plans (RSFMPs) for the northern Lower Peninsula and eastern and western Upper Peninsula began on October 1, 2012. Public review will continue into early 2013, with final approval of the plans to be sought in May 2013. These plans will provide direction to multi-divisional field staff for management of state forest lands. Efforts directed toward biodiversity conservation and featured species wildlife habitat work is incorporated in these plans.

(g) Status of the plan and whether the Department recommends any changes in the plan.

Operational implementation of the strategic 2008 Michigan State Forest Management Plan (SFMP) will be enabled through the RSFMPs. There are no recommended changes to the SFMP until the RSFMPs are completed.

(h) Status of certification efforts required in section 52505 and, beginning in 2006, a definitive statement of whether the Department is maintaining certification of the entire state forest.

The state forest system was originally awarded forest certification in December 2005 under the auspices of Sustainable Forestry Initiative® (SFI) and Forest Stewardship Council (FSC). An annual surveillance field audit was conducted by NSF-International Strategic Registrations (in partnership with Scientific Certification Systems) on October 16-19, 2012, and resulted in a recommendation for continued certification under the Department's existing certificate. No major or minor Corrective Action Requests were issued by the SFI or FSC auditors, which is an outstanding audit result.

(i) A description of any activities that have been undertaken on forest pilot project areas described in section 52511.

Four forest pilot project areas were established in 2006, as required by section 52511. The Department established a team which developed a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the necessary contracts, implementing bids, providing guidance, and conducting the project evaluation. The RFP was released in March 2011. Bids were received and contracts awarded in the fall of 2011. Work will proceed over the next four years, ending in 2015.

In 2011, bids were received for the four pilot areas as follows:

- **Shingleton Management Unit: Compartment 167** Pilot Stands 3, 5, 7, 22; Alger County, T48N, R16W, Section 31, N1/2 of NW1/4, SW1/4 of NW1/4, Schoolcraft County, T47N R16W, Section 6, W1/2 and Section 7, N1/2 of NW1/4; (approximately 239 acres to treat) – **Awarded to Upper Michigan Land Management & Wildlife Services in the amount of \$30,114.00.**
- **Shingleton Management Unit: Compartment 73** Pilot Stands 20, 23, 25, 26, 27 and 48; T42N, R15W, Section 3, E1/2 W1/2, E1/2 and Section 10, NW1/4, NW1/4NE1/4; (approximately 316 acres to treat) – **Awarded to Upper Michigan Land Management & Wildlife Services in the amount of \$91,008.00.**
- **Grayling Management Unit: Compartment 190** Pilot, Stands 20, 22 and 27; T25N, R04W, Section 16, NE 1/4, W1/2SE1/4, NW1/4 SE1/4, E1/2 SW1/4; (136 acres to treat) – **No bids received.**
- **Gaylord Management Unit: Compartment 145** Pilot, Stands 32, 41 and 43, T33N, R03W, Section 6, entire except the SE1/4 of SE1/4; 640 acres (272 acres to treat) – **Awarded to Metcalfe Forestry in the amount of \$40,813.60.**

Metcalfe Forestry and Upper Michigan Land Management & Wildlife Services have prepared their three pilot areas for sale. Compartment 167 was offered for sale by competitive bid on October 12, 2012, as the “167 Pilot Sale” (41-028-12-01). It was awarded to Triest Forest Products, and no harvesting has taken place to date. Compartment 73 was offered for sale by competitive bid on November 27, 2012, as the “Little Buddy Sale” (41-002-13-01) and did not receive any bids. The sale was reduced in price and was re-advertised with a new bid date of January 3, 2013. Compartment 145 was offered for sale by competitive bid on December 4, 2012, as the “Pilot Project Hardwood Sale” (51-113-12-01). Great Lakes Tree Harvesting Inc. was the high bidder, and the contract is in the process of being awarded.

To date, no harvesting has taken place on any of the pilot project areas.